

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-01 DHA-02 ORM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 TRSE-00 VO-03 SCA-01 /077 W

R 161723Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9144

-----171141Z 076741 /22
ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
() Release (X) Excise () Deny

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 1286

Exemption(s): FC
Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full **DECONTR**
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: JUAN MENDEZ MOVED TO MAXIMUM SECURITY PAVILLION IN LA
PLATA PRISON

REF: (A) STATE 031775, (B) BUENOS AIRES 0578

1. SUSANA AND JULIO MENDEZ VISITED EMBASSY YESTERDAY (FEB15)
TO REPORT THAT THEIR BROTHER JUAN MENDEZ WAS MOVED TO THE MAXI-
MUM SECURITY "WING NO. 1 OF UNIT 9" AT LA PLATA PRISON THE
BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY. MENDEZ HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED TO LEAVE
ARGENTINA FOR FRANCE BY A PRESIDENTIAL DECREE SIGNED JAN 14
(REF B). AS UNIT 9 HAS BECOME KNOWN AS THE "WAITING ROOM FOR
DEATH" (FOUR OF ITS INMATES HAVE DIED IN AMBUSHES OR CONFLICTS
WHILE REPORTEDLY BEING TRANSFERRED FROM THE PRISON SINCE
JANUARY (SEE SEPTTEL), THE MENDEZ FAMILY IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED.
IN RESPONSE TO FAMILY INQUIRIES ABOUT JUAN'S AUTHORIZATION TO
LEAVE ARGENTINA, THE INTERIOR MINISTRY HAS RESPONDED THAT
INASMUCH AS THE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE HAS ALREADY BEEN SIGNED,
MENDEZ IS NO LONGER BEING HELD UNDER ITS JURISDICTION AND THE
CASE IS "OUT OF ITS HANDS." THE MINISTRY SAID HIS RELEASE WAS
NOW DEPENDENT ON "BUREAUCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS" AND THE AUTHORITIES
IN CONTROL OF THE PRISON SYSTEM IN LA PLATA (I.E., THE ARMY).

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2. THE FAMILY HAS APPEALED TO A FEDERAL JUDGE, WHO, THEY TOLD

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EMBOFF, HAS AGREED TO PUBLICLY ORDER THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT THE JANUARY 14 DECREE AND RELEASE MENDEZ FOR DEPARTURE TO FRANCE. EMBASSY IS ALSO REQUESTING INFORMATION ON THIS CASE AND EXPRESSING CONCERN THROUGH MILITARY AS WELL AS EXECUTIVE BRANCH CHANNELS. MENDEZ FAMILY ADVISED EMBOFF THAT IT WILL ASK AMERICAN CONTACT [REDACTED] TO ASK CONGREGREEMEN INTERESTED IN CASE (CONGRESSMAN DRINAN AND RAILSBACK) TO CABLE THEIR CONCERN DIRECTLY TO THE ARMY BRANCH IN LA PLATA. B6

3. FAMILY ASKED FOR AN APPLICATION FOR AN IMMIGRANT VISA TO U. S. FOR JUAN. IT APPEARS THAT HE IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A PREFERENCE AND THEREFORE WOULD HAVE TO FULFILL THE NORMAL REQUIREMENTS INCLUDING THE LABOR CERTIFICATE AND THE WAITING PERIOD FOR ARGENTINE CITIZENS (NOW A MATTER OF ABOUT 15 MONTHS). THE FAMILY SAID IT WILL SEEK [REDACTED] ASSISTANCE ON THE JOB AND WAITING PERIOD REQUIREMENTS. IF ALLOWED TO LEAVE ARGENTINA, MENDEZ WOULD LEAVE IMMEDIATELY FOR FRANCE UNTIL GRANTED AN IMMIGRANT VISA FOR THE U. S. B6
CHAPLIN

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